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Naval Service Medical News (NSMN) (96-19)
16 May 1996

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3. HEADLINE: LADY LUCK, NEW EQUIPMENT, STAFF SAVE TODDLER

USNH Okinawa (NSMN)-- A parent's worst fear materialized early May when their 4-year-old son fell while playing outside and hit his head on the cement. Shortly after arriving at the emergency room, the staff realized it was much more serious than a bump on the head. Joshua Derr, son of Marine Corps Captain Michael and Naoko Derr, was bleeding inside his skull. The emergency room staff quickly notified LCDR Chris Guerin, a neurosurgeon assigned temporarily from National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda. After an initial assessment, Guerin realized time was not on his side.

"Because of the pressure on the brain caused by the internal bleeding, it's only a matter of hours before irreversible damage or even death can occur," said Guerin.

The accident occurred during the busiest holiday on Okinawa--Golden Week. A decision was made to treat Joshua immediately instead of wasting valuable time in traffic going to the civilian hospital in Naha. Lady luck dealt Joshua a royal flush that day because the Medical Repair and Radiology staff had completed installation of a new 4.2 million dollar CAT Scan and MRI just two days earlier. The MRI will be on-line by June, but the new CAT Scan, the one needed, was already operating. To add to Joshua's good luck, HM2 T. Ferguson, who had advanced training on the new CAT Scan, had returned to Okinawa just one week earlier.

"Maybe it was just luck or somebody's way of paying us back for a lot of long hours and hard work, but everything fell in to place just like clockwork," stated LCDR S. Peters, MC, USN, Head, Radiology Dept. "Our new machine ran the test in about 40 seconds, compared to an

hour for the old machine".

Joshua was on the operating table within 3 hours of the accident, undergoing a 90 minute procedure to save his life. Joshua is in good condition now and will be released soon.

Teamwork at its best was displayed that day, with the combined efforts of the staff from the ER, radiology, lab, OR, anesthesia, ICU, and neurosurgery a 4-year-old boy will soon be playing again, much to the relief of his grateful parents.

By HMCM(SW) M.C. Carr, USN, USNH Okinawa

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HEADLINE: NEW CREDIT CARD OPENS DOOR TO QUICKER SUPPLIES

BUMED WASHINGTON (NSMN) -- Imagine what it would be like if you didn't have to wait weeks, sometimes even months for badly needed supplies to be delivered. Have you ever had an emergency or just couldn't wait to receive essential equipment to keep the office running smoothly? Now you won't have to wait with the new Federal Government Commercial Purchase Card. This new credit card can be used to purchase both routine and urgently needed supplies and equipment.

The new credit card is a Colorado National Bank/Rocky Mountain Bankcard System Visa with a \$1,600 credit limit. The credit card is for official use only and is U.S. government tax exempt. It is designed to be used by your supply office, as well as non-supply staff, to purchase books, calculators, typewriters, or any other small machinery that you would normally order. Unlike the American Express government travel charge card, the Visa is not a personal use credit card.

In an effort to simplify government procurement (a part of Vice President Al Gore's Reinventing Government Program) the credit card program empowers commands with immediate purchasing power for needed materials. BUMED is one of nine Echelon 1 and 2 commands that have initiated the program.

"Everything's running smoothly, it's a fantastic program," says HM1 Tim Taylor who works as the Property Manager in the BUMED supply office.

Initially the credit card will be used to pay current invoices, eliminating or greatly reducing interest payments. The credit card will also be used for bona fide emergency purchases. This new program will be used for a large percentage of BUMED's small purchases increasing procurement efficiency and potentially saving the government a lot of time and money. As with any program there are do's and don'ts which are covered by required training. Training covers the proper safeguarding of the card, proper technical review and screening of mandatory federal sources of supply.

For further information about the Federal Government Commercial Purchase Card, you can contact BUMED's CDR William H. Roberts, Jr., MSC, at (202) 762-3509 or your local FISC or FISC Detachment for further information.

By Ms. Ann Kirby, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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HEADLINE: NAVHOSP CORPUS CHRISTI GOES FOR THE GOLD

BUMED WASHINGTON (NSMN) -- If you have ever played a sport, you may have dreamed of being an Olympic athlete one day and bringing home the gold. Naval Hospital Corpus Christi, Texas, has a unique offer for their Sailors and Marines who enjoy competitive sports.

Team Olympic Challenge, a five month competitive event, not only enhances personal health and fitness, but also command morale by developing camaraderie. More than 140 individuals, as part of 15 teams, are currently competing weekly in sporting events that are based on the 26 official competitions of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. For example, teams will be competing in soccer, cycling, softball, and swimming to name a few. The final events and closing ceremony will correspond with the June Hospital Corps Birthday celebration.

When it comes to promoting physical fitness, Naval Hospital Corpus Christi doesn't stop with just creating their own Olympic games. In addition, the Health Promotion Department has developed the "XO's Challenge" by offering incentives to individuals who either improve on their last overall physical readiness test (PRT) score by 15 percent or who score more total PRT points than the Executive Officer. The "XO's Challenge," along with recognition certificates presented to those Sailors scoring outstanding on their PRT, fosters a good attitude toward physical fitness. Overall PRT scores are expected to increase during the May PRT cycle.

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Outstanding physical fitness is essential to increasing readiness in the Navy. Naval Hospital Corpus Christi is just one the many commands with outstanding physical fitness programs that can be found throughout the Navy. Using innovative and creative new ideas to increase motivation offered the sailors the push they needed to "just do it" and bring out the athlete in all of us.

By Ms. Ann Kirby, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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HEADLINE: HOSPITAL CORPSMEN TESTED DURING COMFEX-96

ABOARD USNS COMFORT (NSMN) -- The term, evaluator, tends to give the average person a feeling of anxiety or nervousness, but onboard USNS COMFORT (TAH-20) during the recent exercise COMFEX-96, that word made our medical team feel self-assured and ready to perform any surprise tasking. The corpsmen were ready to put all of their education, skills and training to the test.

During COMFEX-96 a group of evaluators entered into the ward that cares for stable patients. The evaluator simulated a situation in which Charlie Bupp, a patient on their ward, had removed his trachea. The first corpsman on the scene was HN Barry Washington, who immediately noticed

the patient's conditions was deteriorating and called for help from his Leading Petty Officer, HM2 David L. Ziehr.

"Nurse, we have a patient who pulled out his trachea... we need a crash cart at rack 14 now," yelled Ziehr.

The crash cart consists of various emergency items, including, Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), a defibrillator, AMBU bag, which is a hand-powered ventilator, and an oxygen bottle. All of these supplies are critical to store in every ward.

Ziehr immediately set-up the oxygen bottle and connected the AMBU bag. The evaluators informed the corpsmen that the patient had cyanosis and his blood pressure was steadily decreasing. A doctor on the ward connected the trachea, while Ziehr kept the patient breathing with the AMBU bag.

"It is crucial that you act fast in a situation like this, because in minutes the patient can die," explained Ziehr.

The patient was brought back to stable condition after the ward brought him to an intensive care unit. The evaluators simulated this scenario because it is very important for the corpsmen to be able to use their training and skill under pressure.

"The evaluators give the corpsmen surprise situations because they must learn how to react quickly under tremendous pressure," said CDR Jesse Harrahill, MC, Executive Officer aboard USNS COMFORT.

This is just one of the many experiences during the exercise. All the wards and other medical spaces onboard the COMFORT have undergone similar training with the evaluators.

By HN Bridget D. Gayner, NMC Portsmouth Public Affairs

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HEADLINE: NMC OFFERS NEW TREATMENT FOR SKIN CANCER

NMC PORTSMOUTH -- The Oncology Department at Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA is now providing the latest innovation in the treatment of melanoma, a type of skin cancer, through use of the drug alpha interferon. For certain patients who have been diagnosed with melanoma and who are considered to be at high risk for reoccurrence, treatment with alpha interferon can reduce the risk of relapse significantly.

Metastatic melanoma, where cancer has spread to other parts of the body, is an incurable disease. Alpha interferon treatment may prevent the development of metastatic melanoma. Patients whose symptoms and history meet the criteria for alpha interferon treatment can receive risk reduction similar in cost and impact to high blood pressure patients who are taking hypertensive medications.

Melanoma is an environmental cancer whose long-term impact has yet to be felt, according to CAPT Vincent Shen, MC, an oncologist at NMC Portsmouth. This year, over 7,000 people will die of melanoma. While new technologies provide

better success rates in treating melanoma, Shen maintains that preventative measures taken early in life offer the best hope of escaping the disease.

"Parents should not only prevent themselves from being sunburned, but more importantly, ensure their children under the age of five are adequately protected," said Shen. CDR Lynn Utecht, Dermatology Department head offers some more tips:

- *minimize sun exposure, especially during peak sun hours: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- *apply sunscreen of at least SPF 15 liberally and reapply every 2 hours.

- *wear appropriate clothing, including a hat, long-sleeved shirt and pants.

- *beware of reflective surfaces: sand, snow and water reflect up to 85 percent of the sun's damaging rays.

- *avoid tanning beds and heatlamps.

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HEADLINE: MAY IS "BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH"

NMC SAN DIEGO (NSMN) -- Great efforts are being made today to educate people about the harmful effects of not wearing seat belts, eating fatty foods, tobacco use and drug and alcohol abuse. But seldom is anything mentioned about the harmful effects noise can have on hearing.

"May has been designated: 'Better Hearing and Speech Month'," said LCDR Keith Wolgemuth, who heads up the Audiology Department at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

"What better time than now to educate people about their hearing and how to take care of it," said Wolgemuth. "It's not that people don't appreciate their sense of hearing," he continued. "They just take it for granted when it's functioning normally."

Audiologists warn that noise induced hearing loss is a gradual process which often goes unnoticed by the individual until permanent damage is done. Damage to other sensory systems is often noticed and reported in the early stages when intervention can help.

"The Navy's Hearing Conservation Program has been designed to prevent needless, permanent hearing loss which affects not only safety and mission accomplishment, but also quality of life for the workers.

People are also encouraged to protect their hearing off the job as well. Operating power tools such as chain saws and lawn mowers, sport shooting, playing stereo or radios at high levels, playing in a band, and even operating small household appliances like blenders and hair dryers have all been documented as being noise hazardous.

By Ms. Pat Kelly, NMC San Diego Public Affairs

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HEADLINE: MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES GAME SCHEDULED

NMRDC BETHESDA, MD (NSMN) -- Naval Medical Research and Development Command will sponsor the first ever Medical

Technology Initiatives Game this August at the Navy War College in Newport, RI. To meet readiness requirements, medical research and development products are an essential element in planning future Navy-Marine Corps operations. Wherever the Fleet or Fleet Marine Forces go in the next century, Navy medical research and development will have already been there.

This game is designed to provide realistic scenarios that center on new medical technology that may influence future readiness capabilities at the strategic, theater and force levels. The game will feature two scenarios: a limited regional conflict and humanitarian operation. Within these two scenarios, environmental threats such as cold, heat, night operations; operational threats like chemical biological warfare, lasers, information war; and the handling of disease, non-battle injuries and combat casualties in the year 2015+ will be considered.

The purpose of the technology initiatives game is to identify emergent medical technologies that will enhance operational readiness. For example, telecommunications, expert systems, remote imaging systems, artificial intelligence, artificial blood, multivalent vaccines, and CBW detectors.

By Ms. Doris Ryan, NMRDC Bethesda, Public Affairs

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HEADLINE: NAVHOSP JAX HONORS OLDEST DOC IN THE NAVY

NAVHOSP Jacksonville (NSMN) -- During the most recent Medical Corps Birthday celebration at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, it was noted that the Senior Surgeon of the Orthopedic Department, CAPT Haydee Kimmich, is the oldest Medical Corps Captain on active duty in the Navy, and may have the same distinction among Captains of all designators. Throughout her medical career, she has left a lasting impression of hard work, competence and compassion.

At the golden age of 50, Kimmich no longer wanted to work as a private practitioner, so she decided to join the Air Force as an orthopedic surgeon. Her goals at the time were quite adventurous.

"I actually wanted to spend maybe three years in the Air Force, three years in the Navy, three years in the Army and then maybe write a book," she said.

She entered the Air Force as a major in 1977 and was quickly promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1978 and then to colonel in 1979.

Kimmich's decision to join the Navy was spurred by meeting CAPT William McDermott, the Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Jacksonville at the time. She said, "When I was at Eglin finishing my three years in the Air Force, CAPT McDermott talked me into changing over to the Navy." She continued, "That wasn't too difficult because I am a sailor at heart and have a sailboat. The Air Force was going to move me to one of their largest hospitals, away from the water." So, when her obligation to the Air Force was

completed, she joined the Navy as a Captain in 1980 with her first duty station being Naval Hospital Jacksonville.

Kimmich will leave Naval Hospital Jacksonville and retire from the Navy on October 1, 1997. Because of her caring approach to medicine and energetic attitude towards her job, the staff and patients of Naval Hospital Jacksonville all agree that when she retires, she won't be 70 years old, but 70 years young. Military medicine may not have seen the last of CAPT Kimmich. She still needs a tour in the Army to complete her goal, and then she'll be ready to write that book!

By HN Phillip C. Hall, USN, NAVHOSP Jacksonville

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HEADLINE: TRICARE QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. How will TRICARE cover military retirees who primarily use group medical insurance, other than CHAMPUS, and who want to use CHAMPUS as a secondary backup? What action must be taken now or in the future, and will there be a cost?

A. For retirees who wish to use CHAMPUS as a secondary payor, TRICARE Standard offers the same benefit as the current CHAMPUS plan. TRICARE has three basic options (Prime, Extra and Standard).

TRICARE Prime is an HMO option which requires enrollment and an annual enrollment fee for CHAMPUS eligible retirees. Enrolling in an HMO entitles you to additional benefits, greater access, and lower cost shares, but you are limited in your choice of providers. You are assigned to a primary care manager (PCM) who will be responsible for all your health care needs.

If you require specialty care, your PCM will refer you to network providers. Most Prime enrollees will not need other health insurance. If you wish to continue using your group medical insurance so that you can stay with your own health care providers and they are not a members of the TRICARE network, then Prime is probably not the best option for you.

TRICARE Standard is the traditional CHAMPUS program, but with a new name. You can still use this option as a second payor (same deductibles and cost shares). TRICARE Extra provides a five percent discount from TRICARE Standard cost shares, and the annual deductible must still be met. TRICARE Standard and Extra require no enrollment.

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HEADLINE: HEALTHWATCH: MODERATION IS THE KEY TO ALCOHOL USE

WASHINGTON (NWSB) -- Alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine and whiskey supply calories, but no nutritional value. Heavy drinkers and alcoholics develop conditions such as malnutrition, cirrhosis of the liver, pancreatitis and increase their risk for high blood pressure and stroke. This is the result of impaired digestion and absorption of nutrients, as well as damage to liver cells by the toxicity

of alcohol. Consumption of alcohol by women during pregnancy may result in birth defects and other complications.

So what is moderate alcohol use? Moderation may be defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. The difference is because the enzyme that helps metabolize alcohol in the body is less active in women.

Current research suggests moderate alcohol use is somewhat protective against heart disease in some individuals, but it is not recommended that you begin using alcohol to prevent heart disease. Keep in mind that alcohol use is not without its risks. The incidence of accidents, violence and suicides tends to increase with alcohol use.

Since alcohol is a source of empty calories, anyone wishing to lose or maintain his or her weight should reduce the intake of alcohol. Even though alcohol is fat-free, at 150 calories per beer, it is easy to see how consuming a six-pack of beer in an evening affects one's overall caloric intake. Excess calories, from any source, are converted into fat and stored by the body as such. In summary, if you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation and when consumption does not put you or others at risk.

By LT Leslie Cox, BUPERS Nutrition Programs Officer

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4. Feedback on this issue, inputs for the next issue, questions about distribution and suggestions for improving Naval Service Medical News are invited. Help us make NSMN better. Contact LT Edie Rosenthal, BUMED Public Affairs Office:

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